

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-02 SS-15 SP-02 MMO-01

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P R 100609Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6149

INFO USIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 1022

FOR CU: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HITCHOCK

USIA FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR NALLE

STATE ALSO FOR NEA

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AF, OEXC

SUBJECT: KABUL CU ALLOCATION

REFS: A. STATE 27676, B. KABUL 842, C. STATE 16571,
D. 75 STATE 296186, E. 75 KABUL 8088

1. BEFORE ADDRESSING THE SUBSTANCE OF YOUR PROMPT RESPONSE, I WANT TO UNDERLINE FOR YOU THE FACT THAT KABUL 842 REPRESENTED MY PERSONAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE DRACONIAN CUTS FORESEEN FOR THE FY 1977 AFGHAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM ON TOP OF THE CUTS ALREADY ANNOUNCED IN REF C FOR FY 1976. FURTHERMORE, THE FACT THAT PAO VERNER AND THE WHOLE COUNTRY TEAM ARE MEETING REGULARLY AND INTENSIVELY TO TAKE STEPS DESCRIBED LATER IN THIS MESSAGE SHOULD UNDERLINE FOR YOU AND JOHN RICHARDSON HOW SERIOUSLY I VIEW THIS SITUATION. THIS NOT QUOTE AN AFAMEC MATTER END QUOTE. IT IS NOT RPT NOT ONLY A CU MATTER, BUT SOMETHING WHICH AFFECTS AFGHAN PERCEPTIONS OF OUR INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN AND IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEREFORE A SUBJECT OF SUBSTANTIAL POLICY IMPORT.

2. CONCERNING "AFAMEC'S PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO FY 76 STUDENT GRANT COMPETITIONS" (STATE 296186, PARA 5), I WISH TO GO ON RECORD AS DEFENDING ITS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN THE LIGHT OF GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA) PRESSURES, ADMINISTRATIVE DEADLINES AND THE NECESSITY OF OPERATING WITHOUT ANY INDICATIONS FROM THE BUREAU AS TO CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF AVAILABLE GRANTS. TO AMPLIFY WHAT I WROTE IN KABUL 8088, PARAS 3 AND 5, AFAMEC IS THE ONLY FOREIGN ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN AFGHANISTAN HAVING THE PRIVILEGE OF SELECTING ITS OWN GRANTEES THROUGH OPEN COMPETITION. ALL OTHERS MUST SUBMIT TO GOA SELECTION. AFAMEC, USING COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS, IS ALLOWED TO SELECT GRANTEES OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY, WITHOUT CONSIDERATIONS OF POLITICAL OR FAMILY CONNECTIONS. THE DEPTJXUST UNDERSTAND THAT IN RETURN FOR THIS EXCEPTIONAL ADVANTAGE, AFAMEC MUST AT LEAST ANNOUNCE THE NUMBER OF GRANTS AVAILABLE PRIOR TO THE COMPETITION. FOR AT LEAST THE PAST THREE YEARS, AFAMEC'S PROCEDURE HAS BEEN TO RECRUIT IN JUNE (IN ORDER TO MEET ETS TESTING DEADLINES AND, THEREFORE, IIE AND EWC DEADLINES) ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S PRELIMINARY ALLOCATION -- AND THIS WAS ALWAYS DONE WITH THE BUREAU'S FULL CONCURRENCE. FOR THE RECORD: AFAMEC RECEIVED ITS FY 75 FINAL ALLOCATION FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE FY 76 SELECTION WAS MADE AND NECESSARILY HAD TO USE THE FY 75 ALLOCATION AS A BASIS FOR THE EIGHT STUDENT GRANTS RECRUITED; AND UNTIL TWO MONTHS AFTER AFAMEC'S SELECTION (I.E., WHEN IT RECEIVED THE ILLUSTRATIVE ALLOCATION OF SEPTEMBER 8, 1975, IT DID NOT KNOW THE PROCEDURES AND NUMBERS HAD CHANGED.

3. IN MY VIEW, AFAMEC (AND THE USIS CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE) HAVE ACTED RESPONSIBLY AND IN GOOD FAITH IN THIS MATTER. WE HOPE THE EXPLANATION GIVEN IN PARAS 3 AND 5 OF KABUL 8088 AND THIS FURTHER DETAILED EXPLANATION LAYS TO REST THE "BUREAU'S REGRET THAT AFAMEC FELT IMPELLED TO PROCEED IN THE MANNER IT DID" (PARA 5, STATE 296186) AND THE IMPLIED CRITICISM OF "AFAMEC'S PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO FY 76 STUDENT GRANT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMPETITION" (PARA 1, STATE 27676).

4. I AM NOT PREPARED TO SEE THE PROCEDURES OF SELECTION CHANGE TO THE EXTENT OF ENDANGERING THE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION SYSTEM WITH ITS STRESS ON EXCELLENCE. IN A SOCIETY WHERE FAMILY AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS ARE (UNFORTUNATELY) USUALLY THE DETERMINING FACTORS IN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS, AFAMEC'S UNIQUE POSITION

MUST BE STRICTLY PROTECTED. TO MEET STATESIDE DEAD-
LINES, THE EXAMINATIONS MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE
THE FINAL ALLOCATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED. THEREFORE,
IN THE FUTURE, AFAMEC WILL ANNOUNCED A LIMSTED NUMBER
OF GRANTS AS AVAILABLE, IDENTIFY PRINCIPLES FOR
THEM AS WELL AS A LARGER NUMBER OF ALTERNATES.
OUR HOPE WILL BE THAT WHEN TSE BUDGETARY SITUATION IS
CLARIFIED, ADDITIONAL GRANTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE
AND CAN THEN BE AWARDED TO ALREADY IDENTIFIED CANDI-
DATES. I BELIEVE SUCH A PROCEDURE SHOULD MEET THE
BUREAU'S OBJECTIONS CONCERNING AFAMEC'S RECRUITING
LEAD TIME.

5. WE ARE CONSIDERING ALL POSSIBLE OPTIONS THAT MIGHT
BE AVAILABLE TO US IN THE HOPE OF INSURING BEST POSSIBLE
FUNDING ON THE PROGRAM SIDE OF THE EXCHANGE BUDGET.
WHAT WE ARE STUDYING IS THE POSSIBILITY OF ELIMI-
NATING THE POSITION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MOVING
AFAMEC INTO THE USIS COMPOUND UNDER THE DIRECT
SUPERVISION OF AN AMERICAN USIS OFFICER, THUS SAVING
SALARY AND SUPPORT COSTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND RENTAL AND UTILITY EXPENSES ON THE SEPARATE
BUILDING. WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE DRAWBACKS OF SUCH
A DRASTIC CHANGE. THEY INCLUDE A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE
IN THE WORKLOAD OF THE AMERICAN USIS STAFF AND A
PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND PERHAPS POLITICALLY DAMAGING BLOW
TO THE AFGHAN PERCEPTION OF AFAMEC AS A TRULY BINATIONAL,

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 IGA-02 AID-05 MMO-01

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P R 100609Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6155

INFO USIA WASHDC

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SEMI-AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION. I AM WILLING TO MAKE THIS CHANGE AND ACCEPT THE RISKS ONLY RPT ONLY IF WE HAVE YOUR ASSURANCES THAT MONIES THUS SAVED WOULD NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM OUR PROGRAM. THE FORMULATION IN STATE 27676 THAT THE MONIES WOULD "BE ASSIGNED -- FOR PLANNING REPEAT PLANNING -- TO PROGRAM CATEGORIES" IS NOT SUFFICIENT ASSURANCE TO OUR PRESENT NEEDS. WE DARE NOT TAKE THE POLITICAL RISK OF SUCH A SEVERE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE THAT THE CHANGE WILL BE BALANCED BY ADDITIONAL PROGRAM RESOURCES. IN FACT, THAT IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH WE BELIEVE WE COULD EXPLAIN THE CHANGE TO THE AFGHANS. I CANNOT EMPHASIZE STRONGLY ENOUGH THAT THE ONLY REASON WE FEEL FORCED TO CONTEMPLATE THIS CHANGE IS BECAUSE WE ARE DESPERATELY TRYING TO SAVE THE SUBSTANCE OF A CU PROGRAM HERE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SEVERE CUTS YOU APPARENTLY FEEL PRESSED TO CONSIDER.

6. AS YOU ARE AWARE, AFAMEC HAS BEEN RECRUITING FOR A REPLACEMENT FOR THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. SEVERAL FIRST-RATE CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. IN EACH CASE, THESE CANDIDATES NEED AN ANSWER FROM AFAMEC SO THEY CAN MAKE ALTERNATE PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR IF A FIRM JOB OFFER IS NOT FORTHCOMING. IT IS ALSO IMPERATIVE THAT IF MAJOR CHANGES ARE MADE IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AFAMEC, AS MUCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TIME AS POSSIBLE BE PROVIDED DURING THE INCUMBENCY OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO INSURE AS SMOOTH A TRANSITION AS POSSIBLE. FINALLY, IF CHANGES OF THIS DIMENSION ARE TO TAKE PLACE, WE NEED TIME TO ADVISE AND REASSURE CONCERNED AFGHANS AND THUS MINIMIZE THE POLITICAL COSTS.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WE NEED A COMMITMENT THAT IF ADMINISTRATIVE SAVINGS ARE POSSIBLE, THE RESOURCES WILL NOT BE LOST.

8. WE WILL, OF COURSE, WELCOME ANY FURTHER COMMENT FROM STATE/USIA PRIOR TO VERNER'S CONSULTATIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT IN EARLY MARCH.
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